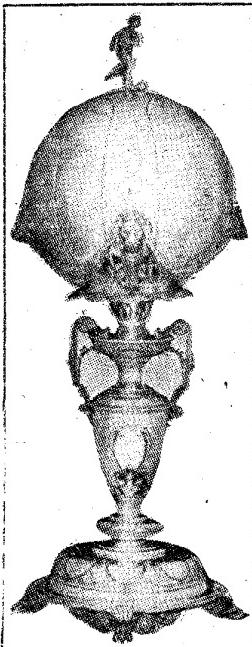


WANDERERS LEAVE IT SO LATE!



Friendly is off

WYCOMBE Wanderers' proposed friendly against St Albans City from Division 2 of the Isthmian League tonight (Tuesday), has been postponed because of the weather.

On Saturday the Blues travel to Slough Town for the third and deciding meeting between these local rivals. The Rebels won 3-1 at Loakes Park in the Isthmian League but Wanderers took their revenge with a 3-0 return win at Wexham Park a fortnight ago. This third meeting is in the third round of the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup.

Tomorrow, Wycombe Wanderers youth are away to St. Albans Youth in the Berger Paints Isthmian Cup. Wycombe must win if they are to clinch the third place in section A which will put them into the finals.

Isthmian League Premier Division

(up to end Inc. 16/1/78)

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Enfield | 26 | 21 | 4 | 1 | 62 | 16 | 67 |
| Wycombe | 26 | 17 | 2 | 7 | 46 | 26 | 53 |
| Leatherhead | 26 | 14 | 7 | 5 | 46 | 23 | 49 |
| Hitchin | 26 | 13 | 7 | 6 | 43 | 30 | 46 |
| Carslton | 27 | 12 | 7 | 8 | 46 | 38 | 43 |
| Tooting | 27 | 12 | 7 | 8 | 38 | 33 | 43 |
| Croydon | 26 | 12 | 6 | 8 | 41 | 34 | 42 |
| Hayes | 26 | 12 | 6 | 10 | 36 | 37 | 42 |
| Dagenham | 26 | 12 | 5 | 9 | 47 | 39 | 41 |
| Sutton | 24 | 11 | 5 | 8 | 32 | 34 | 38 |
| Staines | 24 | 10 | 7 | 7 | 30 | 33 | 37 |
| Hendon | 27 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 36 | 37 | 36 |
| Barking | 27 | 10 | 4 | 13 | 43 | 45 | 34 |
| Walthamstow | 22 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 34 | 45 | 31 |
| Boreham Wd | 26 | 8 | 7 | 12 | 32 | 48 | 30 |
| St Albans | 26 | 8 | 6 | 13 | 34 | 45 | 29 |
| Kingstonian | 27 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 29 | 39 | 26 |
| Woking | 22 | 8 | 3 | 13 | 34 | 41 | 21 |
| Southall | 26 | 4 | 9 | 13 | 28 | 48 | 21 |
| Leytonstone | 28 | 3 | 11 | 14 | 29 | 48 | 20 |
| Tilbury | 22 | 4 | 7 | 11 | 31 | 41 | 19 |
| Stortford | 27 | 3 | 6 | 18 | 28 | 60 | 16 |

Berger Youth Cup

(up to 5/1/78)

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|----------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Southall | 11 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 28 | 14 | 24 |
| Slough | 12 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 29 | 13 | 23 |
| St Albans City | 11 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 21 | 17 | 18 |
| Hendon | 11 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 30 | 19 | 16 |
| Wycombe | 11 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 28 | 23 | 16 |
| Maidenhead | 10 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 20 | 23 | 14 |
| Wembley | 12 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 14 | 35 | 9 |
| Wokingham | 12 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 13 | 36 | 4 |

Marlow off

MARLOW'S game in the

Bridgend Town 0, Wycombe Wanderers 1 REPORT BY STUART EARP

At first, Bridgend's pitch looked in fair condition but once play had got under way the previous week's flooding and cold weather took its toll. It soon became a muddy mess which, as manager John Reardon feared, suited the home side perfectly and blunted Wycombe's fast and free flowing football.

Despite that, Wanderers wasted no time in carving out the chances. From the kick-off Keith Mead's long punt upfield was backheaded by Clive Charles to his goalkeeper. The ball fell short, Derek Harris nipped in and Graham Mackenzie had a clear chance but saw his effort fly wide.

Four minutes later Bridgend were in more trouble as the impressive Paul Birdseye crossed low and hard. Dave Annets, a big goalkeeper, failed to hold the ball but Charles cleared off the line. From then on Annets enjoyed a fine game. He needed to as well, for Wycombe had 80 per cent of the first half and kept the home side pinned inside their own territory.

As early as the first 15 seconds the Blues might have found the net and from that moment on they established themselves as the better side. So they should have been, after all, they play in a superior league.

But the longer the game went on the more anxious

Wanderers and their 600 or so supporters became. And if Gary Jones's 88th minute volley had gone in instead of striking the crossbar, Wycombe's interest in the competition might have disappeared. As it was, the Blues scored a minute later to bring the pulse rate of their fervent fans back to normal level.

For Bridgend, this was their biggest game of the season. Their average gate in a passionate rugby area is normally below three figures, so Saturday's 1,000 was a real bonus. The town had probably never seen anything like it: 400 supporters, players and officials wending their way from the railway station to the ground in one long train.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS Supporters' Club which organised transport arrangements for both supporters and players on Saturday, was highly praised by both officials and club manager (writes Stuart Earp). The Supporters' Club arranged through British Rail for a train to take the 400 strong party to Bridgend and back and they also handled the catering arrangements.

Wanderers' chairman Reg Williams paid tribute to their efforts, saying: "This was the first time the players and supporters had travelled together under arrangement of the supporters' club and the whole venture was a marvellous success. The Supporters' Club deserves full marks."

Manager John Reardon also thanked the club on behalf of the players. On the return journey several of the players took time off to chat with supporters, and several fans asked me to convey their thanks for this gesture.

But then Bridgend began to bring some physical tactics into the game in a bid to upset the visitors. It worked, too, for the home side had their best spell at this stage. Wanderers lost their rhythm, especially up front where Harris was having a difficult time. Eventually Dylan Evans replaced Tony Horseman.

Three quick corners restored Wycombe's pressure and in the 72nd minute Bob Davies's cross from a short corner caught everyone by surprise. It flew across the face of goal to Mead, whose side-foot shot was blocked by the diving Annets.

GREAT SAVE

Back came Bridgend and Peter Spittle, untroubled for the previous 80 minutes, pulled off a great save when he tipped Graham Bennett's close range header away for a corner following a fine cross from Charles. A minute later Beattie was booked for a foul on Kennedy.

With only two minutes left most people were looking forward to a resumption at Loakes Park on Tuesday. But those last two minutes proved decisive. First Bridgend won a corner which was cleared out to Jones on the edge of the box. He cracked in an unstoppable shot that hit the underside of the crossbar, bounced down and was cleared. Witnesses said the ball was over the line, but referee Bevan waved aside appeals after looking at his linesman.

That incident gave people

plenty to talk about during the break but the most worrying aspect of Wycombe's play was their inability to find the net. The early stages of the second half saw a continuation of the first with the Blues firmly in the driving seat.

That incident gave people plenty to talk about during the break but the most worrying aspect of Wycombe's play was their inability to find the net. The early stages of the second half saw a continuation of the first with the Blues firmly in the driving seat.

Then, with only a minute to go, Holifield struck the decider. Birdseye, carrying a painful shoulder injury, collected a throw-in and crossed into the box. Holifield controlled well, slipped past Paul Harris, sidestepped Annets and rolled the ball home.

Wanderers had the ball in the net during injury time when Priestley's drive was deflected home by Paul Harris but the linesman ruled offside.

BRIDGEND: D. Annets; C. Charles, C. Stapleton, P. Harris, W. Harris; R. Husking, J. McIninch, A. Beattie; G. Jones, G. Bennett, D. John. Sub. B. Colwill (not used).

WYCOME: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies; G. Mackenzie, J. Priestley, H. Kennedy; A. Horseman (sub. D. Evans 71 mins); D. Harris, M. Holifield.

Referee: M. Bevan.

Half-time: 0-0. **Goalscorer** — Holifield (89).

Attendance: 1,000.

High praise for Supporters' Club